

**Please Amend Claims 1-4 as follows:**

1. (Currently Amended) A rotary head apparatus, comprising:
  - a rotary drum whose outer circumferential surface serves as a sliding surface relative to a recording medium; and
  - at least one magnetic head lying on the sliding surface of the rotary drum,
  - wherein the magnetic head comprises base members juxtaposed along a sliding direction relative to the recording medium; and a playback magnetic element disposed between the base members and slanted at a predetermined azimuth angle with respect to the sliding direction,
  - wherein a recording-medium opposing surface of the magnetic head is wider in a longitudinal direction serving as the sliding direction than in a lateral direction perpendicular to the longitudinal direction,
  - wherein the opposing surface is curved in two convex shapes extending towards ~~the~~a outside of the rotary drum, one along ~~the~~a longitudinal cross section of the magnetic head extending across ~~the~~a center line of the magnetic head laterally dividing the magnetic head into two parts, and the other along ~~the~~a lateral cross section of the magnetic head orthogonal to the center line, and the opposing surface is formed such that ~~the~~a apex of the lateral cross section is gradually displaced in a first displacement from the center line ~~as distancing itself~~with increasing distance from the center of the opposing surface in the longitudinal direction and is gradually displaced from the center line in the opposite direction to the ~~above~~first displacement as ~~distancing itself~~in a second displacement with increasing distance from the center in ~~the~~a reverse longitudinal direction, and
  - wherein the opposing surface is formed such that the ~~two~~first and second displacements of the apex laterally away from the center line in a sliding area of the opposing surface with the recording medium are respectively at most 2  $\mu\text{m}$ .

2. (Currently Amended) The rotary head apparatus to Claim 1, wherein the opposing surface has a pair of long sides extending in the

longitudinal direction and being parallel to each other; a pair of short sides slanted at the same angle as the an azimuth angle and being parallel to each other; and a pair of acute angular corners formed by the long sides and the short sides, and

wherein the apex is displaced from the center line and comes closer to either of the corners ~~as distancing itself~~ with increasing distance from the center of the opposing surface.

3. (Currently Amended) A magnetic playback apparatus, comprising the rotary head apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein, when the recording medium is wound around the a circumferential surface of the rotary drum by a predetermined angle, and the rotary drum of the rotary head apparatus is driven to rotate, the magnetic head slides on the recording medium as the recording medium moves in the longitudinal direction, and the magnetic head thus reads magnetic information at least recorded in the recording medium.

4. (Currently Amended) The magnetic playback apparatus, comprising the rotary head apparatus according to Claim 2, wherein, when the recording medium is wound around the a circumferential surface of the rotary drum by a predetermined angle, and the rotary drum of the rotary head apparatus is driven to rotate, the magnetic head slides on the recording medium as the recording medium moves in the longitudinal direction, and the magnetic head thus reads magnetic information at least recorded in the recording medium.